

## SOME INCIDENTS OF BERNHARDT

Bernhardt and Jean Richepin.

Many are the old stories about Bernhardt that have been revived during the past week. That of her first meeting with Jean Richepin of the French Academy is worth repeating. Richepin had been a good deal of a vagabond, wandering about Europe and gathering the material for the stories and plays which afterwards earned him a fauteuil in the Academy. One night in Paris he went to see Bernhardt play and was carried away by her genius. He determined to meet her and made his way to the stage door. There he encountered the usual throng of caped and monocled johnnies waiting with their floral offerings for the great artiste. But when she appeared at the threshold Richepin cleared them away like so many figures of straw, lifted her violently into his arms and kissed her. Bernhardt started to uncork the vials of her wrath—and she can be terrible when she is aroused—but catching a glimpse of the handsome fellow with piercing eyes and blonde beard who was holding her captive, she changed her mind. She gave him her card, begged him to call a cab and allowed him to accompany her to her home. It was two years before the ardor of that sudden friendship cooled.

Sarah to Lady Brassey.

Another facetious story goes that at a reception in London a blundering flunkey announced to the consternation of everybody, "Mademoiselle Bernhardt and son." Lady Brassey came later and met the great actress who immediately introduced Maurice. "But Mademoiselle, I did not know that you were married," said Lady Brassey. "I am not and never was," Sarah replied. "Mais, votre fils—." "Ah! mon fils—c'était une accident d'amour."

The Thinness of Her.

When Bernhardt first came to this country slenderness was not as violently sought and as elaborately accentuated by our women as it is today. So the boniness of her was the subject of much jesting. An Oriental potentate who was invited to meet her in Paris, it was recalled, had remarked, when asked what he thought of her: "In my country we drown such women." "All flesh is grass," quoted a Chicago paper shortly after her arrival; "Bernhardt must have been raised during a drought." A minstrel joke of the day involved a guess as to what sort of a Christmas present Sarah received in her stocking. "A lightning rod," was the answer. Nobody ever thought in those days that Bernhardt would have the courage to exhibit her legs on the stage in such plays as "L'Aiglon" and "Hamlet." Her extreme thinness excited more interest than her art. One odesmith broke forth with:

"How thin is Sarah Bernhardt, pa,  
That shadow of a shade?"  
"My boy, she's just about as thin  
As picnic lemonade."

A Boston paper was responsible for the following: "Sarah Bernhardt will come to this country to play 'Rosalind.' As Sarah can't possibly play it for the sole purpose of showing her legs, it is barely possible that we may see a good performance."

Sarah's Regimen.

We used, in those old days, to hear more of what Sarah ate and what she drank and how she managed to keep thin. The interviewers seem to be more scrupulous nowadays about asking for these domestic details. We only learn from one that she eats little bits of ham and spinach and from another that she soaks her toast in her coffee, not very enlightening for those feminine readers who long to get rid of their encroaching adipose. In former years she used to tell how she consumed vast quantities of fish and eggs "by the dozen, ten a day very often." And she used to confess her partiality for champagne. She was never much of a believer in fresh air, pointing out that she retained her fresh complexion despite the ten or twelve hours she spent every day in the bad air and artificial light of the theater. Even when she took her vacations at Belle Isle-on-Sea she never went out without muffling up her face to protect it from the breezes.

When Sarah Weakened.

Nothing has distinguished Sarah Bernhardt from other women of international renown quite as much as her indifference to the opinion of Mrs. Grundy. She has always been quite frank in her unconventionalities. Hypocrisy is not in her. She has lived her life as she saw fit to live it and after many a hard fight has mastered public opinion and compelled the conventional to accept her as she offers herself. I can recall only one instance when she weakened before the clamor of the mob. That was when Oscar Wilde fell from his high estate and was loaded with the abuse of a pharisaical public. Shortly before he had written "Salome" for Bernhardt and she had put it in rehearsal. If she had produced it, or even paid him for it as she had agreed to do, the money so earned would have been very handy for his defense in court. But she did not dare to play it and repudiated the arrangements which she had made.

Her Bitterest Foe.

It was only a short time ago, by the way, that Bernhardt's bitterest foe died in Paris in great misery. I refer to unfortunate Marie Columbian who attacked Bernhardt in a book called "Sarah

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